



Speech by

JULIE ATTWOOD

Member for MOUNT OMMANEY

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QUEENSLAND BUILDING SERVICES AUTHORITY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (3.04 p.m.): The objective of this legislation is to amend the Queensland Building Services Authority Act 1991 and to make a number of administrative amendments to provide for the ongoing maintenance of proper standards in the building industry. This will be achieved through a number of mechanisms to increase accountability, provide greater consumer protection and improve compliance. Strong measures are included to rid the industry of those who carry out grossly defective building work that adversely affects the structural performance of buildings or endangers human life. This includes those who exhibit a pattern of behaviour of non-compliance with contractual and payment obligations and those who demonstrate their irresponsibility through repeated financial failures.

The Building Services Authority's auditing powers will be expanded to include contractual terms and conditions under both the Queensland Building Services Authority Act 1991 and the Domestic Building Contracts Act 2000. An offence will be created for a licensed operator to knowingly engage or contract to an unlicensed person when that person is required to be licensed under the act. Subcontractors who do not contract directly to builders or the public but who subcontract to licensed trade contractors to carry out work approved under the licensed trade contractor's licence class will not be required to be licensed.

The bill is intended to provide for the ongoing maintenance of proper standards within the industry by banning from the industry those persons who have demonstrated an inability to meet the most basic standards of workmanship, financial management or honesty. The bans in relation to financial dealings are non-discretionary and provide for persons to be banned from the industry for life for a second or subsequent financial failure or for a conviction in relation to asset-stripping.

The bill establishes a head of power for the introduction of a fee for lodgment of a dispute notification with an amendment to the Queensland Building Services Authority Regulation 1992 to set the fee at \$20. The Queensland Building Services Authority is a statutory authority funded by industry primarily through licence fees. The ability to refuse an inspector access to a building site will significantly advantage those licensees not meeting their obligations under the act. Other Queensland jurisdictions have similar right of entry powers, particularly in relation to premises at which a business is being conducted. The bill mirrors the powers and protections of those jurisdictions.

Representatives from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, the Department of Public Works, the Department of Housing, the Department of Tourism, Sport and Fair Trading, the Department of Industrial Relations and Queensland Treasury have been consulted in the preparation of the bill. The strength of the building industry in Queensland is regarded as a significant indicator of the health of the Queensland economy. In May 2000, 144,000 people in Queensland were employed through the construction industry. The major objective of this bill is the maintenance of consumer confidence in the building industry. The increasing cost of investment in housing to the consumer makes it essential that consumer confidence in the ability of the industry to deliver acceptable standards of workmanship is high. This, of course, will result in positive economic growth for Queensland. I congratulate the minister and commend the bill to the House.